

Opening by Mrs. Tzipi Livni, Vice Prime Minister

and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hotel Dan Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv, Israel

Opening session of the PPP conference, June 5, 2007, 10:00

Honorable Mr. Paolo Garonna, Deputy Executive Director of
UNECE,

Deputy Ministers,

Yehuda Raveh, the Israeli member of the UNECE expert group
on PPPs, whose initiative, together with the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, brought the Forum to Israel,

Distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished guests representing the Public and Private sector
of the UNECE Countries,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Opening

I'm honored to host you in Israel, at this first – of – its – kind
UNECE Regional Expert Meeting on Public Private
Partnerships, organized by the Government of Israel and the
UNECE.

About this conference

This conference of Public Private Partnership represents the shift in today's world.

In the past we used to live in a world of traditional arrangements: the First Sector – Governments – providing public services, with limited Governmental resources, while the second sector – Private businesses – were responsible solely for the bottom line of their profits at the end of the year.

Public Private Partnership in the Global Era

Entering the new Millennium, we've entered a new world, where social responsibility has become an issue for private businesses, creating the Third Sector.

First by understanding the importance of the social environment for their profits and success and then by a genuine will to contribute to the society we live in.

We welcome the growing contribution of the third sector: Private companies participating in national processes by supporting social projects in order to empower different groups in the community.

However, I want to stress as an Israeli Minister that the important activity of the Business Sector does not reduce the responsibility of the Government.

Governments should continue to bear the prime responsibility of attending to public needs, and provide safety net for the people, while cooperating with the Private Sector.

The safety net provided by the government must include as the very minimum, adequate access to basic needs – food, health, housing and education – while striving to help elevate the less fortunate members of our society in order to provide them an opportunity for their future – both directly, as well as through the Partnership with the Private Sector.

The Globalization

In this respect, one cannot ignore another major factor of the twenty first century: the Globalization process.

Globalization affects our world mostly by transferring the most advanced technologies, expertise and capital available, worldwide.

American and European companies investing in Israel, a Portuguese architect designing the string bridge in Jerusalem, Israeli companies building in Turkey and Europe while Turkish companies building in Central Asia, are only a few examples of the global village that becomes smaller and smaller.

The case of Israel

Israel represents a fascinating micro-cosmos that demonstrates how far a country can reach in a short time.

Israel is a State that began with a market concentrated almost completely in the hands of the State or political parties, through labor unions, where food was distributed by the government through coupons for basic products such as eggs, milk, meat etc., and passed a remarkable process of privatization and opening up to the world.

And two weeks ago, Israel was invited to join the OECD.

Today we're continuing the process of Privatization – applying the first rule of the Economy: maximizing the competitive advantage, by having each sector do what it does best.

Public sector designs policy and directs the Private sector into upgrading national infrastructure, providing services of the highest quality to the public.

Challenges for the Future

Dear Deputy Executive Director, you at the UNECE have a great role – at a crucial time.

The UNECE includes some of the worlds leading economies – alongside some that are newly established transition economies, finding their way from socialistic to market economies, in a very similar path to the one Israel had to find.

One of the greatest challenges is turning limitations and difficulties into opportunities. Necessity is the mother of all inventions – this is what drove Israel from the start.

Every difficulty became a challenge to turn around, making stumbling blocks into springboards.

No water in the Negev desert area? Scientists discover ways of using saline water to grow sweet cherry tomatoes.

Israel is the only Middle Eastern country without oil and gas in the neighborhood? Again, scientists develop advanced solar technologies.

Limitations turn into opportunities – and when this is the attitude, nothing can stand in the way of progress and development.

Closing

Our role here is to seize the opportunity that the UNECE grants us, providing the platform – and the bridge – to share knowledge and ideas on how to promote our economies – and our countries – using the Public Private Partnerships as a vehicle.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Israel to all our guests, and wish you a good conference and fruitful discussions.

Thank you.